

## Haklin on Park (2018)

Park, Sun-Young. *Ideals of the Body: Architecture, Urbanism, and Hygiene in Postrevolutionary Paris*. U of Pittsburgh P, 2018, pp. ix + 372, ISBN 978-0822945284

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From public parks and leisure gardens to the city's first gymnasiums, swimming pools, race tracks, boxing rings, and even roller coasters, *Ideals of the Body* traverses a postrevolutionary Paris that unites well-known sporting grounds with others that have previously remained in obscurity. Concentrating largely on the forgotten locations of sport and exercise, Sun-Young Park reinvigorates scholarly debates on public and private space, gender, and the body in this impressive debut monograph tracing the origins of modern physical culture in the French capital. Park's original insights on architecture, hygiene, and health—as well as her investigation into their ideologically charged discourses—demonstrate that there are many more imprints to be made on the well-trodden scholarly turf of French modernity. *Ideals of the Body* will therefore appeal to interdisciplinary researchers of the long-nineteenth century since the architectural focus swerves away from Haussmann, moving instead toward a constellation of socio-political factors that impacted how diverse spaces sculpted bodies and formed identities in the burgeoning metropolis.

Each of the five chapters brings into focus one prototypical figure—the soldier, the schoolboy, the demoiselle, the *lionne*, and the sportsman—whose inspiration is drawn from the popular literary genre of the *physiologies*. Foregrounding the athleticism of these *types parisiens*, Park reveals how ideals related to exercise and shifting social roles became enmeshed with nationalistic discourses as France reshaped its identity in the politically contentious climate following the 1789 Revolution. The volume's high-quality illustrations of architectural plans and visual materials ranging from caricature to painting, along with an insert of eleven color plates, provide an attractive and effective display of Park's compelling archival work. Maps developed using GIS technology highlight the clustering of hygienic spaces in certain areas of the city, fortifying the claim that changes to urban space shaped the lives of individuals who, in turn, transformed their physiques in the facilities studied.

The opening chapter examines the soldier and theories of physical and moral hygiene as they relate to Paris's first gymnasiums. Park excavates plans for an unrealized military gym to establish how urban architectural planning initiated a “new pedagogy of the body” (68), wherein initiatives to strengthen both the soma and the psyche sought to reestablish discipline following the political upheavals of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. Teasing out the conflicting corporal ideologies that converged upon wrestling and gymnastics, Park underscores how the soldier's morphing corporality became political due to perceptions of sport as either an antidote or a threat to social order. The example of the military gymnasium generates the methodological lens through which the “spatial logic” (172) of other facilities are considered in the following chapters, subsequently setting in motion the argument for physical culture as central to the dialogue between “social norms, urban forms, and ordinary citizens” (298).

The second chapter on the schoolboy dovetails with the first by highlighting institutions whose “cross-pollination with military culture” (128) led to the physical education of France's youth. The formation of male citizens in educational settings depended on mechanisms of control, which were executed as much through the spatial configuration of Paris's early campuses (with Louis-le-Grand being one notable case study) as through the exercises performed within their facilities. In this context, evoking Foucauldian concepts of the panopticon and the heterotopia is appropriate. However, Park successfully performs a delicate tightrope walk, balancing these oft-cited critical notions with her richly documented primary source research. Her work ultimately stresses the mobilities and interminglings of everyday citizens within and between the institutions discussed, thereby revealing the complex interplay between subjects, spaces, and sports.

The architecture of the book itself foregrounds the gendering of hygienic discourses. Departing from the male figures of chapters one and two, the third chapter puts the spotlight on the demoiselle by showing that secular educational spaces promoted an image of corporal strength, with young female bodies viewed as the eventual bearers of the nation-in-repair's future citizens. Though more depth of discussion on the *Amazone* might be desired, the fourth chapter on the *lionne* explores feminine sporting activities in public leisure gardens where amusement and physical culture converged. The sportsman, the subject of the final chapter, emerges as a fully formed citizen whose training in boxing rings and swimming pools engendered new forms of spectatorship and contributed to the rise of bourgeois culture, thereby bringing the dimension of social class into sharper focus. Emphasizing the ambiguities of built and social environments, the epilogue provides a cogent rereading of modernity as a lived experience, one that was prescribed by architecture yet not entirely determined by it, as each chapter imagines how subjects circulated within the public, private, and liminal sporting spaces of the capital.

A range of fields will benefit from Park's research, particularly cultural history, architectural and urban history, literature, art history, as well as the medical humanities since the book's primary concern is public health. Although findings will prove useful to many, Park tends to privilege a historical approach rather than adopt an interdisciplinary methodology wherein discipline-specific methods would be interwoven throughout the text. Nonetheless, her architecturally driven analyses provide nuance for ongoing discussions about the emergence of modernity and physical culture across the field of French studies.

*Ideals of the Body* sheds new light on familiar critical terrain, most notably on the body as it is shown to circulate within the hygienic spaces and changing architecture of pre-Haussmann Paris. Redressing the dominant image of frailty that would seem to prevail during the Romantic era, Park reframes the postrevolutionary period as one in which the body's vigor surges to the fore. Moreover, while the salutary discourse pertaining to parks and gyms is perhaps to be expected, that of others—such as the thrill ride of *les montagnes russes*—might come as a surprise. Exploring these crucial (if at times unlikely) wellness practices, as well as the architecture that supported them, *Ideals of the Body* supplies an innovative view of how military, educational, and recreational facilities formed both male and female bodies as they sweated, flexed, and forged themselves into France's modern citizens.

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